Pappardelle with White Shrimp, Fresh Grape Tomatoes, Basil, Saffron, and Capers

Napa Rose

Serves 6 to 8

6 quarts water
1 pinch (20 medium threads) saffron
2 tablespoons coarse salt
1 pound pappardelle pasta
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
2 tablespoons chopped garlic
1/2 cup diced onions
1/2 cup diced fennel
18-24 white shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 cups chicken stock
1 1/2 cups red grape tomatoes, cut in half
4 cups (1 pound bag) fresh spinach, rinsed
2 tablespoons chopped basil leaves
3 tablespoons butter, softened
2 tablespoons capers
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For pappardelle pasta:

1. Boil water, saffron, and salt in a large stockpot over high heat.
2. Add pappardelle pasta and cook for 2-3 minutes or until al dente. Drain, rinse, and place in a large mixing bowl, toss with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil to prevent sticking.
3. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add minced garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add onions and fennel and continue cooking for 4-5 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
4. Add shrimp, chicken stock, tomatoes, and spinach and toss to combine. Cook for an additional 3-5 minutes or until shrimp are pink and slightly opaque.
5. Add cooked pappardelle pasta, basil, butter, and capers and thoroughly toss. Once butter is melted and pasta is heated, season to taste and serve.

Pappardelle Pasta Dough
4 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
4 extra-large eggs, room temperature
1/2 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons water

For pappardelle pasta dough:

1. Place flour on a large clean work surface. Create a mound and make a well in center. Combine eggs and olive oil in a small mixing bowl, whisking thoroughly. Pour into the well; incorporate flour using a fork, beginning slowly at first. Push against the outside wall of flour with your other hand to prevent the wall from collapsing as you continue to mix.
2. When approximately half the dough is incorporated, the dough will begin to come together. At this point you can begin using your hands to further combine the dough and liquid. Add 1 tablespoon of water at a time if necessary
3. Knead dough using heels of your hands and push dough away from you. Turn dough, fold it over and continue kneading for 4-5 minutes or until dough is smooth and elastic.
4. Form dough into a ball and wrap in plastic wrap. Set aside and allow to rest at room temperature for at least 20 minutes.
5. Divide dough into 6 equal portions. Pass dough through a pasta machine according to manufacturer's directions. Start at the thickest setting and adjust the setting to the thinnest setting as you progress.
6. Cut pasta into 1 inch wide and 6- 8-inch long noodles using a knife. Dust lightly with flour to prevent sticking and place on a cookie sheet until ready to cook. (Dough can be frozen up to 2 months.)

Cook's Notes:

If you don't have a pasta machine, simply roll dough out on a clean work surface, using a rolling pin dusted with flour. Turn occasionally as you roll to keep a uniform shape and thickness. Once dough is very thin, you may cut the dough.

When cutting the pasta, don't worry about making it straight or perfect; this is part of the charm of homemade pasta.